

APPEARED
2A.

MIAMI HERALD
10 February 1986

Agents in Greek CIA form new union, threaten strike

By LEE STOKES
Special to The Herald

ATHENS, Greece — "Dimitris," as he called himself, sat in a small, dimly lit apartment near the seedy Omonoia Square, which acts as the temporary headquarters of Greece's latest union: agents of the Greek Central Intelligence Agency.

A somber Byzantine icon of Jesus hangs on one wall, while a black-and-white picture of Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, to whom the agency now is directly responsible, sits forlornly behind two packs of Greek cigarettes.

Like any labor movement, the union of agents of the Central Intelligence Agency (or KYP as it is known in Greek) is out to get a better deal for its members.

"If the prime minister doesn't accept our demands, we shall go on strike, camp outside his doorstep and invite the press to photograph us at work," said Dimitris, a short, well-built, middle-aged high school graduate, on behalf of the newly formed KYP union committee.

Downplayed in press

KYP's struggle to improve the lot of its agents has been downplayed in the Greek press for "reasons of national security."

"We work long hours, receive small salaries and have no chances of promotion because senior positions in the service are automatically occupied by military officers," Dimitris said.

Two other KYP employees and union members present in the apartment nodded in approval.

For KYP agents to meet representatives of the press, let alone make demands from the government through a union, would have been unheard of before the Socialist government came to power five years ago.

"Times have changed," however, and the ball started rolling when members of the feared riot police, or MAT, gave interviews to leftist papers saying they were victims "of the system and their senior officers."

Riot police members started speaking to the press after their deputy commander was assassinated by "November 17," an underground leftist terrorist group that since 1975 has claimed the lives of dozens of U.S. officials and senior Greek police officers.

First union

KYP, however, is the first branch of the security forces to start a union and proclaim its "democratic ideals."

"We are doing nothing wrong. ... We're just following what the

Socialist government says about workers' rights, for we are workers as well," Dimitris said.

The Socialist government seems quite taken aback by the whole affair.

Government spokesman Antonis Kourtis said KYP's case is "being examined" but refused to comment further.

Papandreou has openly refused to meet a KYP union delegation, and his personal police bodyguards have received orders to carry KYP agents away if they try to camp outside his doorstep.

There are those who think the KYP union is making "a big mistake."

Last week, a homemade bomb blew up a KYP bus only yards from an Athens police station.

Police believe the bomb was planted by nationalists who oppose KYP's new image as a workers' union.

Those associated with KYP before the Socialists came to power are also highly critical.

"A strike would damage KYP because it is such a sensitive service," said a former KYP director, Gen. Kyriakos Papageorgopoulos.

"Military officers are essential in the service because their training allows them to evaluate information at a strategic and tactical level, something a KYP civilian employee cannot do," Papageorgopoulos said.

Papageorgopoulos said that between 10 to 15 percent of KYP's staff are military officers.

Papageorgopoulos also opposes changes in senior KYP personnel being made by the Socialist government.

"Political parties in Greece make the mistake of thinking that when they come to power, they must change the KYP hierarchy," he said.

'Unwise'

"That is unwise, for it takes a military officer a long time to gain the experience and have the information which will allow the government to protect the nation's interests," Papageorgopoulos said.

KYP's latest deputy commander is air force Brig. Philippos Makedos, a former Greek Embassy defense attache in Washington.

Makedos, during his American tour, in reports sent to Athens, described Greek-Americans as "servants of imperialism" and of "having a fascist mentality."

These reports later were leaked by the conservative opposition daily Vradyni.

While the pro-Moscow Communists applauded this description of the Greek-American community, the main opposition conservative New Democrats are appalled by the whole affair, and the situation in KYP.

"Brig. Makedos' employment in such a vital position should be reconsidered by the government," New Democracy said.

"KYP is a national agency and not a party service to justify a party hack as leader. We are appalled by Makedos' statements as well as by his appointment to such a sensitive post," New Democracy said.

"KYP agents camping outside the prime minister's door for more pay would symbolize the state our country has reached," one opposition newspaper commented in an editorial last week.